

This project is a shining example of new construction and a catalyst for future projects. When people see one of the anchors of Main Street being renovated or expanded, this can change the whole psychology of a town or community. It offers hope. It serves as a catalyst for a far-reaching ripple effect of positive changes.

The addition of an elevator will improve access for people with disabilities and will equip the Opera House for its next 100 years. As the principal author of the Americans with Disabilities Act, I am heartened to see more and more of our old, historic buildings being retrofitted to improve access for citizens with disabilities.

So I congratulate the citizens of Greenfield for putting together a winning proposal to secure a Main Street Challenge Grant. Their efforts to reinvigorate their historic downtown are setting a terrific example for other small towns across America, and for that, I salute them.●

ELKADER, IOWA, RESTORATION

● Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, one of the greatest challenges we face—not just in Iowa but all across America—is preserving the character and vitality of our small towns. This is about economics, but it is also about our culture and identity. After all, you won't find the heart and soul of Iowa at Wal-Mart or Home Depot out in the strip malls. No, the heart and soul of Iowa is in our family farms, and on Main Street in small communities all across my State. That's why we need to be as generous as possible—and creative as possible—in keeping our downtowns not just alive but thriving.

As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I'm involved in funding many hundreds of programs every year. But the Main Street Iowa program—providing challenge grants to revitalize downtown buildings across my state—is in a class by itself. It's smart. It's effective. And it touches communities and people in very concrete ways.

For example, the citizens of Elkader restored and reopened one of the cornerstones of their town, the Elkader Cinema. The Elkader Cinema, formerly known as the "Circle Theatre," was repaired with the assistance of a Main Street Challenge Grant. The faded, broken marquee and dilapidated building were sad focal points in Elkader's downtown, and the entire building was on the verge of demolition when the citizens of Elkader formed a special committee to spearhead the reopening the theatre. The committee was awarded a Main Street Challenge Grant of nearly \$50,000. Without the grant from Main Street Iowa, the private party who purchased and renovated the theatre building most likely would not have undertaken the project, as it would have been too risky.

The theatre is now a thriving business. It is open seven days a week, and

attendance has proven the seven-day-a-week schedule to be worthwhile. The theatre has had a very positive impact on other downtown businesses as well, bringing customers from all over Clayton County into Elkader. This project has been a tremendous success for Elkader, Clayton County and Main Street Iowa.

The beauty of the Main Street Iowa program is that the ideas and initiatives come from our small towns and rural communities. I have been pleased to secure \$1.5 million in funding since 2002 for Main Street Iowa Challenge Grants. The Main Street programs of the Iowa Department of Economic Development help provide technical assistance, but, as we have seen in Elkader, success itself comes from local leadership, local teamwork, and home-grown ideas and solutions.

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DUBUQUE, IOWA, DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

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For example, the citizens of Dubuque, IA are showing much initiative in restoring and renovating their downtown area. Dubuque actually received two Main Street Challenge Grants for their downtown; one to restore a six-building, 30-residential unit, 13-store-front neighborhood, and one to revive a landmark building downtown.

The Upper Main Revitalization project started as a two-building rehab, and has since expanded to six buildings. Marking an important gateway into Dubuque's downtown district, Upper Main, arguably the neediest district in the city center, will be taken from one of the most blighted blocks remaining in downtown Dubuque to one of the most refreshed, vibrant stretches of street in the district. This project will put the second and third floors of these buildings back into residential use for the first time in more than 30 years. Momentum is already growing in this district as a result of this project.

The second grant will be used to renovate and restore the Old German Bank, whose most recent incarnation was as the Silver Dollar Cantina. This building is an extremely significant structure in the oldest Historic District in Dubuque. The building suffered a double hit 3 1/2 years ago when the sandy soil in the Main Street area settled, causing cracks in the building. This halted business for several months. Then a few months after it reopened, a fire totaled the building. The Silver Dollar Cantina was popular long before the Old Main district was considered to be trendy, so it was a considerable loss to the downtown area when it was forced to close. With the use of their Main Street Grant, the Silver Dollar will open again, filling the niche of a popular lunchtime spot and even more popular nightclub. This grant is serving to preserve a true anchor of the community.

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So I congratulate the citizens of Dubuque for putting together winning Main Street proposals. Their efforts to reinvigorate their historic downtown are setting a terrific example for other small towns across America, and for that, I salute them.●

CENTRAL CITY, IOWA, DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

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